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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHEAT

Tuesday, April 5, 1932.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "April Jobs." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Backyard Playgrounds." Order from the Childrens' Bureau,
U. S. Dept of Labor.

A look at the calendar this morning reminds me that it's high time to be doing a lot of spring jobs. April is the month when the housewife's program is full-- winter work to be finished up. And lots to do to get ready for summer.

A generation or so ago spring housecleaning was the biggest job on the April calendar. But that annual orgy, when the house was torn up from top to bottom, is fortunately becoming a thing of the past. The modern way of cleaning is to do it daily and weekly through the year. Dirt is no longer allowed to accumulate month by month until the job of cleaning it out is enough to give the whole family nervous prostration.

No, we housekeepers today clean as we go and to make the job easy we have such modern equipment as vacuum cleaners and dustless mops and so on. But we still believe in spring housekeeping-- that is, a seasonal checking up before spring passes into summer. The paint pot comes out in all its glorious colors to refurbish the porch furniture, the window boxes or any other worn pieces about the house.

This is the season also to begin storing away furs and other winter clothing safe from moth attacks.

Then there are the awnings and screens to look over, and summer slip covers for furniture. Do any of them need to be repaired or replaced?

And the furnace. When its work is over for the winter, have it cleaned out and put in order all ready for fall.

There's the garden to consider also. And the lawn. Are the garden tools and the lawn mower in good working condition?

Then there are the children to consider. It won't be long before they'll be spending all their play time outdoors so it's time to equip their play yard.

Big packing boxes with small ladders, boards, saw horses and planks give youngsters opportunities to make all sorts of climbing arrangements. A lot can be done with a plank. They can elevate the plank at both ends to make a high bridge, for example. Or they can lift one wide for a slide. Or they can support it in the middle for a sec-saw.

A swing of just the right height and a sandbox full of sand and equipped with cast off kitchen utensils will fill many happy hours with busy play. Be sure to see that all equipment is safe for the children to use, no sharp nails or rough edges to cut.

Every youngster needs some motor toys. A wagon large enough and strong enough to last a number of years will carry rocks, grass, sand, children or pets equally well. A tricycle and a substantial toy truck supplement the wagon and make possible other activities.

There's a very handy little leaflet published by the Children's Bureau called "Backyard Playgrounds." It suggests different equipment that Father or Big Brother could build for the children. This leaflet gives both directions and diagrams for swings, slides and so forth. If you want a copy just write to the Children's Bureau. Washington, D. C. Ask for the circular called "Backyard Playgrounds."

As for the house, this is the time to start dressing it up for summer. Bright weather sometimes makes the house which has seemed pleasant enough all winter, look drab and shabby. The interior seems to need a new dress to suit the brightness outside.

It isn't necessary to spend much to make the house look fresh and cheerful. Rearranging the furnishings sometimes helps. Try the sofa, table and chairs in some new grouping or the beds against another wall. Sometimes putting the pictures in new places makes a difference.

Simple, light, inexpensive summer curtains may replace heavy, warm-looking or dark hangings. Heavy, warm, dark upholstery may be covered with chintz or denim slip covers. If the sofa is worn or shabby make a slip for it to match the chairs.

The fewer nick-nacks about the house, the less dusting there will be during the summer.

So much for April jobs. Now to answer a question or two.

One housekeeper I know has been having a lot of trouble with her nice linen towels. They have been coming back from the laundry with small slits or cuts showing. And of course, once these cuts appear, the towel goes to pieces in a short time. She wonders what has caused this trouble.

My answer would be: "Page the man of the house." Home treatment, not the laundry, often damages the household linens. Towels and sheets may be harmed in many ways unnoticed at the time. The evidence appears only after the linen has come back from the laundry. The man of the house who has a habit of drying his razor blades on towels is probably responsible for those small cuts. No matter how carefully he dries those sharp blades, they are likely to cut a thread or two. And then the damage is done. The weakened thread will wear through shortly and leave a small hole. This towel damage is so common that many hotels furnish special cloths in every room for razor blades.

Often, holes appear in table cloths because bread knives have been used

without a bread board. They cut the table cloth or at least weaken some of the threads.

Look over your laundry before you send it out. Mend even slight tears in household linen before it is laundered and it will last longer and save money.

I've had several letters asking how to take the printing off flour and feed bags. Occasionally someone tells me that soaking in kerosene oil helps remove the print. But the textile specialists in the Bureau of Home Economics tell me that many times this printing will come out just by soaking in hot water. If this treatment isn't enough, soak the sack in a strong soap solution, they say. Then spread the sack in the ground in the sunlight without rinsing or wringing out the soapsuds.

For the stubborn inks or dyes--and you occasionally find these--more drastic treatment is necessary. Treat such print to a bleaching. You can buy bleaches at the drug store or the grocery. Use them according to the directions given for the particular bleach you buy.

That bulletin on stain removal will also give you information on bleaching. If you haven't a copy, send for "Stain Removal from Fabrics", Farmers' Bulletin 1474.

What's on the program for tomorrow? I'll tell you. We're going to discuss the second vitamin on the list--vitamin B. You remember last Wednesday that we talked about vitamin A? Well, we're continuing the story from there. We might call this the Wednesday vitamin serial-- the complete story in weekly installments.

And now I'm on the subject, I might as well tell you about the rest of the week. Tomorrow, vitamin B, as I said. Thursday, a talk about shopping for the new cotton fabrics on the market. And Friday a Sunday dinner, a menu that reminds me of Sunday dinners in merry England. On Friday I'll also give you a recipe for excellent Yorkshire pudding, and I'll answer some of your recent questions.

